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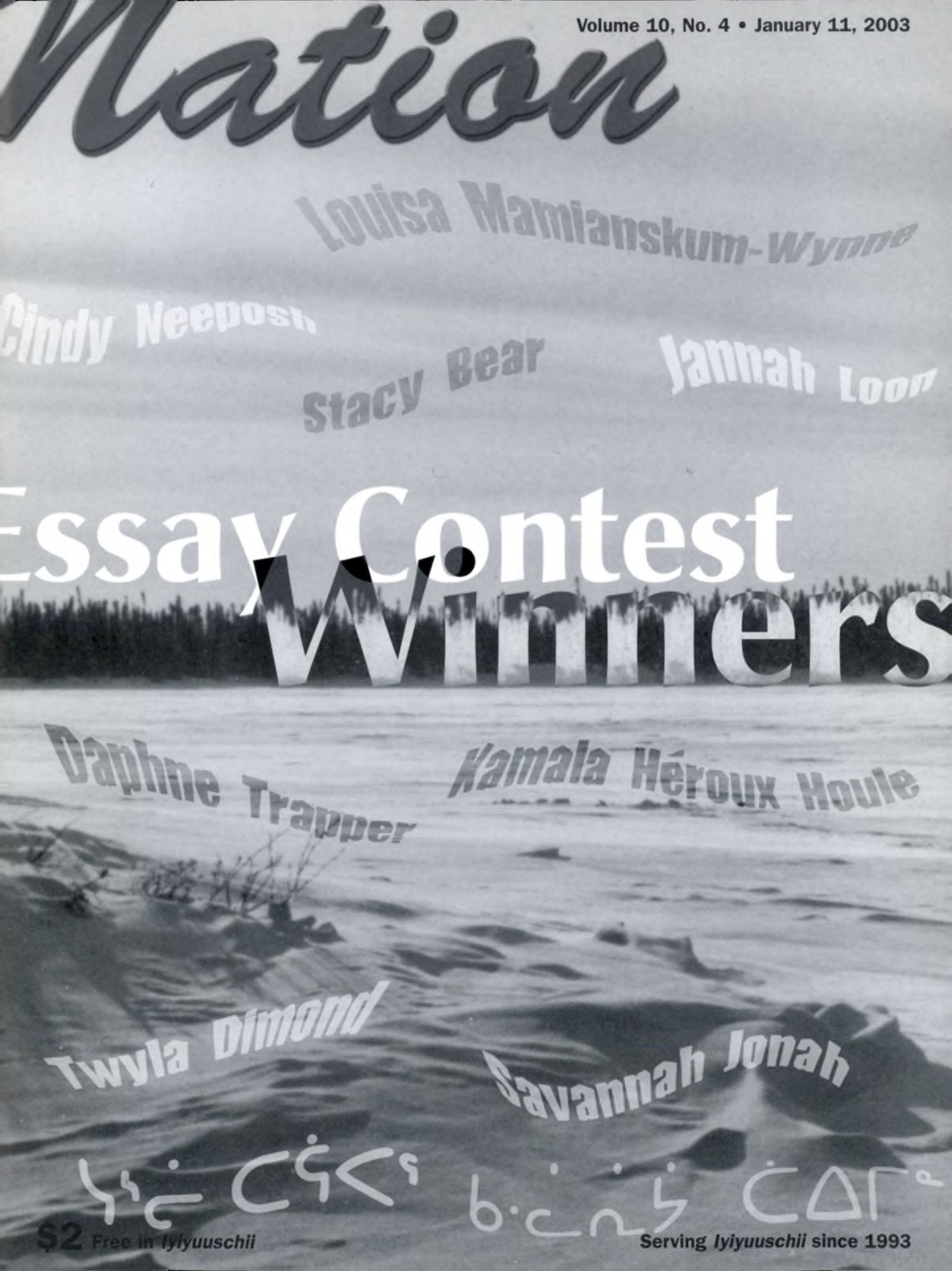
Nation



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A BETTER WAY TO KEEP YOUR NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS

Does this scenario sound familiar? New Year's coming! Like many of us, you examine your life, find things are less than ideal, and begin dreaming of a better future. You make a New Years' resolution to lose weight, get back into shape by exercising regularly and eating healthy. You're excited by the prospect of change. You buy a cool outfit, maybe even invest in expensive exercising equipment, and start an exercise program ....and then you fizzle out before actually incorporating any real changes into your daily routine. By February or March, it is the same old you, the same old life, and the same old couch potato vegetating in front of television.

This does not mean you are weak, but you are obviously stuck big time. You've fallen victim to the biggest myth ever – that all you need is a little more *willpower*. It's a highly overrated concept and can lead to great disappointment, particularly if you are working toward long-term change. The problem with willpower is that it is defined and fuelled by emotions. Think about it: When you start your exercise program, you feel strong, committed, and confident. You're highly motivated because emotionally you're on a high. You can do anything, right? But emotions tend to fade. No one can be up all the time. Soon you lose energy and become less committed. The less committed you feel, the more you find excuses not to exercise and eat right. How often does this happen? Not some of the time – all of the time.

That's not to say willpower doesn't have its purpose. It's great in the short run. But willpower is not how you change your life in the long run. Many of us aren't strong in the willpower department. The only way to achieve real change can be summed up in one word: programming. Unlike emotionally fuelled willpower, good solid planning will carry you toward your goals even when you don't feel like it. Programming will get you out of bed on a cold February morning to go walk or jog when you feel as if you'd much rather crawl back into the warm bed. To succeed long-term, you have to take emotions out of the equation and to do that, follow these six steps, and reprogram your approach to your resolutions.

Step 1: Choose a realistic goal. Focus on only those you have control over, and don't pursue outcomes that are unattainable. For example, if you want to lose some weight, losing weight would be your goal.

Step 2: Quantify your goal. Real goals must be measurable and observable; otherwise you'll be bogged down trying to figure out what you're actually aiming for. Serious goals leave no room for confusion about what is desired. Going back to the previous example of losing weight, losing 10 pounds would be an excellent way of measuring your goal.

Step 3: Define your goal in terms of small steps. Goals must be carefully broken down into manageable steps that ultimately lead to the desired outcome. Don't try to create change in giant leaps. Be patient and let it happen over time. Back to the example of losing weight, think about losing weight through physical activity and healthy eating. You can start by walking 30 minutes every day and eating 3 healthy meals a day. No more poutine. Drinking water or diet pop instead of regular soft drink, having a fruit instead of chips or chocolate bar, and making other small but healthy changes.

Step 4: Set up a time line for achieving your goal. You need a particular calendar date and a schedule for completion. "Some day" is not a day of the week. Be precise as to what you are going to do and when you are going to do it. Think about losing your 10 pounds by June 30, 2003.

Step 5: Get one or two friends or family members to change with you. This way you can encourage each other through rough and tough times.

Step 6: Create a system to monitor your progress. Without accountability, you are apt to con yourself – or fail to recognize poor performance in time to adjust your behaviour. Ask your local CHR or a friend or a family member if you can report your progress to them on a regular basis. The thought of looking someone in the eye and admitting failure is typically unpleasant enough to motivate you to stick with your resolutions.

By Sol Awashish

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A winners Eeyou Istchee
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Rez notes

SONNY ORR

Leaders et al

I looked into the shiny new gymnasium floor at the yet to be named Sand Park High, in 1971. "How old do you have to be? I'm 12 years old, I'll be 13 next year, and can I join the Leaders Corps?" I questioned John Delaney.

"What grade are you in?" he asks me in return.

"Grade Seven," I zip back and John nods semi-approvingly. "Yahoo! I'm in the Leaders Corps! What a great start to a school year," I think to myself as I eagerly traipse down to Miss Bell's French class.

I was what you may call a nerdy looking chubby kid with short hair, 12 years old and eager to get down to learning at the new school with young, new teachers. Our classes were the highest education level in any of the communities at that time and the school was loaded with a fully equipped gymnasium. It had a highly polished hand laid hardwood floor, meticulously swept clean on a regular basis every time it was used. This floor became a testing ground for our physical condition and the benchmarks that were already high in 1971 for the next four years. I emerged a nerdy looking guy with muscles and long hair.

We ran for miles, did push- ups, hand stands, chin ups, sit ups and just about every up in the world of gymnastics and sports, that four years later, turned out many finely honed young leaders. It was a sad day to leave that school, as it was the last year of Indian Affairs education management and we had to leave to go south to finish school. When we left those four good years of hard-core leadership, mental, physical and down right excellent coaching by the best that Midland, Ontario had to offer, John Delaney and Lloyd Stackhouse. Both are still outstanding athletes (albeit 200-pound athletes) and Lloyd was a marvel to see in the basketball court, and he drilled us tirelessly in the art of the layup. Lloyd was a special kind of guy and we looked at it as, that, being coached by the first white guy who was ever asked to join the Harlem Globetrotters, was truly an honour.

We learned that yes, one man can play against himself in a game of badminton, that the ceiling in the gym wasn't really that high if you gave it an extra oomph on the trampoline, that girls can be better than you in the gym, that guys from Waskaganish loved to cartwheel endlessly, that I can stand on my hands and walk around, that there are many ways to fool a batter when you're the pitcher, that basketball isn't just a game, it's a sport, that a good head on your shoulders is better than that muscle in my arm, that self defense is really about not fighting, that true leaders are really good sensible people who respected others. We learned more than pure physique in the leaders corps, it molded our entire outlook in life in a positive way; yes we were people with life skills that lasted throughout our lives.

There were many of us, and we all had our own special talent. Ron could survive the hardest falls, Hugo had the innate ability to check his team mates during a rough hockey game, William could do handstands on chairs, I could do a lot of sit-ups, Elizabeth was light and could be thrown around easily, Mary looked great on the trampoline, Sally won the Tom Longboat award for outstanding athlete in the country, Patricia and Lorna were deadly in pinball, Freddie was a basketball wiz, and to top it off, many of us went on to represent Northern Quebec in the Arctic Winter games in Alaska.

But thoughout this whole period, John and Lloyd were there to guide us. Now 35 years later and the Leaders Corps in which we had so much fun, learned so much from and generally had long lasting friendships, is ending in Moose Factory. Our Leaders Corps lasted only in our memories and hearts. Congratulations to John Delaney and Lloyd Stackhouse on a triple decade of commitment and ceaseless patience in helping us learn true values and what real leaders are made of. Thanks for those good years.

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WASKAGANISH HOCKEY CHRONICLE

White Winter Halloween Week

The White Winter Season has been around in the Bay James territories since Halloween week. Does that mean we'll have a longer or shorter winter if we consider that the cycle of season has been changing in the last years. If that means hockey season will last longer, kids will have more time to improve their skills if they wish to play like Jonathan Cheechoo. I reckon our fall period was shortened when we had the first Snow Storm back in October so that hockey fever could get under way!!!

In the third week of November, Snow Storm Season hit Southern Québec causing late fall commotion. Remember?! That morning on French CBC (Société Radio-Canada...SRC), they were describing the scene as LA VRAIE PREMIÈRE TEMPÊTE DE NEIGE DU QUÉBEC. Did I have white storm news for them. I don't know if their weather forecaster's technological instruments have been out of power for this part of the country? The migrating geese of autumn on their way to Carolina Hurricanes marshlands would have been better messengers of our cold conditions. So do you know what I did? I couldn't help it! I sent the message myself through email communications telling our country's national television about our snow-cold temperatures starting way back before Halloween Week. Still waiting for a response. I'll let you know how they reacted.....if anyone does...

########

The RHLeague of Waskaganish has been under way for a while now. Just a few games before Xmas Break. Even though most teams have included new players on their rosters, there are two skaters missing from last years Finals. Eagles'goalie Tyrone Moses has left town to stop pucks elsewhere (in North Bay his dad has told me) while last year's Wolves' Playoff MVR (Most Valuable Rat) Jacques A. Morin found another job closer to Montréal's Bell Center. There was a rumor going around during last year's hockey season that MVR had his own fan club who would come to the arena just to watch him put on an entertaining show. I suppose you had to be there to believe it so much that I started believing it myself. So those of you who have boycotted this season's Wolves' games, please come back...Dennis!! Speaking of putting on a show. Steve Stevens who has replaced Tyrone as the Eagles' goalie has had at least 2 outstanding performances against who else but the Ratless Wolves.

########

Here's a trivia for you readers. They all have the same answer.

What can you do with frozen water...even in November?

What can snow cover...even in November?

What can be done with a frozen abandoned lagoon...even in November?

When you wear skates...what are you skating on...even in November?

########

Something unusual happened the other night at the far end of the rink. It was during a Wednesday game versus the 1st place Lynx. I usually keep a water bottle on the top of my net. Most of my defencemen drink from it during stoppage of play. Once in a while refs come over to take a sip. I don't mind. It happens on occasion that I cover the bottle with my goalie glove just before an opponent tries to grab it. In these cases, I hope they don't mind that kind of a save. Sometimes though some of them sneak behind my jersey in order to satisfy their thirst hoping I won't notice. Lots of them get away satisfied. So back to the game. It was just before a face off to my right. A Lynx player I won't name was skating towards my net with his hand reaching forward. I thought he wanted my bottle as I was about to take it. Listen to this. He approaches, slides his finger on the crossbar and skates away not at all worried about the water. I look closely. What do I see? A piece of moist nasal mucus split in two hanging on to the bar as if he was going to aim for it on his next missed scoring chance. In other words, a hockey player's booger!!!! I couldn't believe my nose. The buzzer rang right after. Later on in the 3rd period I grinned as I saw the Lynx's goalie put his glove on that same spot.

########

For those Leafs and Habs fans out here in the tundra hunting caribous, seems like Cujo's replacement, ex-Hawk Eddy Belfour who was chosen as player of the week a few weeks back, is starting to win games for his team in front.

Can't say the same for poor ol'Théo whose average hovers near four goals a game...for Cheechoo that would be the most amazing rookie start since 99...but for the 2002 Vezina & Hart trophee winner...I don't know...how he will rebound from it. A millionaire goalie cannot afford to give away rebounds when trying to get his game back in shape. I reckon this situation couldn't be better for Hackett. Who knows, he might win the honours in 2003 and keep the hopes alive for # 25...

Merry Christmas!

Joyeuses Fêtes!

A ratless Wolves

Xmas Stand-off

Kuujuaq–On Friday January 3rd, a 20-year-old man with a medical history of mental illness, spurned on by an insult from an unidentified local, triggered a 20-hour standoff with Kativik Regional Police.

Fortunately, the standoff ended on Saturday, January 4th, 2003, with no fatalities, although one local man, Taamusi Sivuaraapik received non-life threatening pellet wounds in his forehead, temple, and throat.

The shooting spree had started at around 8:40 P.M. on Friday evening, after which the man retreated into house 349, from which he continued to shoot.

Local constables from the Kativik Regional Police Force, as well as Canadian Rangers set up a perimeter around the dwelling. Around 3:30 A.M. on Saturday, additional police from Kuujjuaraapik joined them in the standoff.

The KRPF called in a team of tactical experts from the Montreal detachment of the Surete de Quebec, but before the S.Q. could get to Puvirnituq, police had taken the man into custody.

According to KRPF Captain Larry Hubert, "We started to go after him, there was a foot pursuit and he was taken into custody without incident at 5:04 P.M.

Jane George, director of communications for the Kativik regional Government cautioned that violent crime is on the rise, due to the increase in Drug and Alcohol abuse, although statistics for alcohol and drug abuse were not kept as recent as 10 years ago.

"The increase of the number of flights coming in, as well as easier access to alcohol like the SAQ website, where people can get their alcohol delivered," George cites, adds up to a disproportionate number of criminal violence.

ANONYMOUS STRIKES AGAIN

I just read a beautiful story, published in your *Nation* magazine on December 13, 2002, about an anonymous Native woman that fought with courage and conviction for her rights and her liberties as an abused young spouse, but also as an oppressed member of the native condition in which many of our youths are doomed to live in.

She, alone, with little support from her community, steered against the stereotype of a conventional fearful society that is still controlled by colonial values. Even our best leaders, defending the idea of native self-governing society, are still funded by all sorts of federal and provincial programs that are seen by the country politicians more as expensive Indian privileges than by their obligations towards their own treaties.

That kind of global dependency towards the federal Indian Act inhibits the actions of our chiefs toward justice and development for their own people. On the other hand, it allows many non-native companies, consultants of all sorts and mixed native and non-native administrators to grab the best wealthy positions, while many native leaders have no choice than to stick to their powerful positions, with their speeches of promised freedom. Meanwhile, time passes and generations of youngsters are sacrificed for peaceful agreements signed in controversy and tread for privileges instead of rights in the name of their First Nation people.

Am I exaggerating towards the situation that digs a bigger hole every day between richer establishment leaders, administrators, and the population where more youths are left in a deeper social anxiety?

No, because what I say is what our people think daily in the suffering conditions where they have to keep silent and stay anonymous to get from everyone the little share of their begging needs.

In addition, if her people can talk in her back, as she says, I too, can talk back in the face of her Nation. Men, women and youths, when placed in conditions of permanent stress, poverty and total dependency towards "charity funds" lose their self-esteem as useful citizens and adopt misbehavior attitudes with their pairs or against themselves.

Our anonymous native spouse was victim of a man that was probably victim himself of our "Indian system." Her children are also at risk, if our chiefs, in unity, don't stand up more aggressively in their traditional claims for justice and self-governance for our First Nations.

For the moment, anonymous people, brave women with few rights, strong men without proper jobs, youths with few qualifications, leaders that struggle for more resources are stuck again in a lonesome time when truth is condemned to live in a world of darkness, where tongs can't say what their heart feels, where our minds don't express the words our people say.

We all know that there is a price to pay in our communities for those who speak openly against these crimes; it deserves social banishment, from the top level to your nearest clan. So, keep anonymous until you hear the thunder of the ancient drum cropping up after its long exile in the deepness of our nation sleeping soul.

For speaking, loud and clear, our anonymous friend will probably never be on the menu of our chiefs' grateful speeches. She might never win any honorable mention from our high-class institutions. But for the betrayed ones, she has won much more than her Nation has ever done for its people: she has gained the liberty that sparkles proudly in the deepness of her free woman's eyes.

All others who suffer under these underground laws, those who have to kneel in silent upon constant oppression, remember what I say. A day will come not far from now- before this generation passes, when many more youths like her will free themselves from their poor "in-reserve conditions" and at the beat of their buried drums, will arise new words that will claim their rights to a real and great free Nation of Crees.

Meanwhile, we all know that her story is the bare truth of many more native people; young girls confined to their limited roles of servants, young men untrained for useful jobs, elders cut from the spirit of their real ancestors, chiefs crawling for their colonial subsides and so on.

However, be patient! A testimony like hers, cried out in the Nation wide, is far to be useless. Perhaps it troubles the good thinkers that we are but each word, like a shovel, digs out the silent drum of our Nation that other people has made us believed to be an evil thing.

In this new Holiday Season, let's hear another sound of our great drum that I offer to this great anonymous woman of the Cree Land.

Anonymous 2.

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The Nation & CSB Essay Contest

Overall Winner

The importance of Education

I am very grateful to have been raised by a stern and loving father. I have much to thank God for. If it weren't for my father, I would not be where I am or what I am today. I honestly believe that he did a great job in raising me. I would like to share a short story about my experiences and hopefully bring some level of awareness to our youth about the importance of education.

I remember when I was growing up as the only girl in our family, I was his favorite but I knew that he loved my brothers equally. He tried to teach me right from wrong, though it was not easy at times. I was headstrong and tried to do as I pleased. I always knew that he always wanted what was right and the best for me. Yes, sometimes I had to learn things the hard way because I did not always respect what he wanted me to do. I realize that these mistakes were learning experiences and that from these experiences we learn and grow. I am no religious fanatic; however, I truly believe in what the Bible says that you should respect your father and mother so that you will live longer and prosper. You have to heed their words and abide by them.

My late father taught me a lot about life and how I should live my life. He taught me that you have to have a dream to be what you want to be so that you can aspire to achieve that goal, no matter how difficult it may be and if you persevere you will eventually get there. I used to wonder how he knew the importance of education despite the fact that he had no formal schooling. He would encourage us to go to school and tell us that we would not get anywhere without education. He would tell us that we wouldn't be able to get good jobs if we did not go to school and that we will be living on the welfare system for the rest of our lives. This is what got me to think about my education seriously or so I thought.

As soon as I graduated from High School I went to college, I was 17 years old. I completed one year of college successfully from the Native Core program and the following year I started to drink and experiment with drugs. This is ironic because I was enrolled in the Social Worker program; this is a program where one had to be serious and to prove their commitment to helping others and themselves as well. I was doing more harm than good to myself. This is when I learned that education and drinking don't mix. I failed miserably. I was not allowed to stay in school because I had failed. I could have appealed but I chose not to in fear of a second failure.

For the next few years, I had jobs that had no meaning for me. I was not serious about anything. Then in 1987, I went back to school I was enrolled in the Early Childhood Education Program at Vanier College in Montreal. I was still drinking and completed 2.5 years of this program over a span of 3 years. I don't know how I managed to pass my courses but I barely made the passing grade of 60. This is the passing mark if you study at the college level in Quebec. I decided then to take a year off from school.

In 1991, I worked for one year at a job that I did not particularly like because I did not understand the functions of this position. I was subsequently released from this position due to the fact that I was not fulfilling the requirements of this job. The following year I had a baby and I decided that since I had another person to care for, I realized that I had to change my life drastically. This was when I began to seriously think about getting my priorities straight. I knew that going to school and trying to raise a baby alone at the same time would be very difficult, but I decided to give it a try anyway. I went back to school and got my college diploma in Office Administrative- Executive program in 1995. It was hard at times, my baby who was then a year old went through three surgeries for her hip problems, but I managed to finish my program with a decent grade this time. I could not have done it without my parents' support and encouragement.

In May 1995, there was a job opening for an Executive Secretary in the Legislative Department at the WFN Corporation and I applied for the position. I was very grateful to have been hired for that position and promised myself that I would try to do a good job now that I had the relevant training in this field. I

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Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs, Northern Development and Natural Resources

Comité permanent des Affaires autochtones, du développement du Grand Nord et des ressources naturelles

HOUSE OF COMMONS
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BILL C-7

The First Nations Governance Act

The House of Commons Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs, Northern Development and Natural Resources, will be holding hearings across Canada to seek the views of First Nations members, leaders and organizations on the proposed First Nations Governance Act.

Persons and groups interested in appearing before the Committee on the legislation are invited to submit their request in writing by **January 24, 2003** to the Committee Clerk:

Elizabeth Kingston
Room 632, 180 Wellington Street, House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6
Fax: 613-996-1962 E-mail: **AANR@parl.gc.ca**

The Clerk will notify those selected to appear and provide all necessary information.

Those not selected (or unable) to appear before the Committee may prepare written or taped submissions, which must be received by the Clerk **no later than February 14, 2003.**

Each day's hearings will also allow time for some individuals who have not made formal requests to address the Committee, providing they identify themselves at the witness registration desk.

For more information about locations and schedule, visit **www.parl.gc.ca** and click on **"Committee Business"** or call **1 (613) 996-1173.**

PROJET DE LOI C-7

Loi sur la gouvernance des Premières nations

Le Comité permanent des Affaires autochtones, du développement du Grand Nord et des ressources naturelles de la Chambre des communes, tiendra dans les différentes régions du Canada, des consultations pour connaître le point de vue des membres, des dirigeants et des organisations des Premières nations concernant le projet de loi sur la gouvernance des Premières nations.

Les personnes et les groupes qui souhaitent présenter au Comité un exposé sur le projet de loi sont invités à soumettre leur demande par écrit à la greffière du Comité d'ici le **24 janvier 2003** :

Elizabeth Kingston
180, rue Wellington, Pièce 632, Chambre des communes
Ottawa (Ontario) K1A 0A6
Fax : (613) 996-1962 Courriel : **AANR@parl.gc.ca**

La greffière communiquera avec ceux qui auront été choisis afin de leur fournir les renseignements nécessaires.

Ceux qui, pour une raison ou une autre, ne peuvent pas comparaître peuvent tout de même soumettre à la greffière **au plus tard le 14 février 2003** un mémoire manuscrit ou enregistré.

À toutes les séances, du temps sera réservé afin que les intéressés puissent présenter un bref exposé au Comité. Les personnes désireuses de participer de cette façon devront se présenter au bureau d'inscription des témoins.

L'horaire des déplacements du Comité et toutes autres informations pertinentes seront versés dans le site Internet du Comité à **www.parl.gc.ca**, cliquez sur « **Travaux des comités** » ou composer le **1 (613) 996-1173**.

Canada

worked in this capacity for two years. In 1997, I got a promotion as the Administrative Assistant to the Chief's office, which I held until November 1999 when I was appointed to another important position as the Executive Director of the WFN Corporation. Our present Chief served as the Executive Director until he had to resign from this position in order to assume his duties and responsibilities as Chief. I was officially hired as the Executive Director in July 2000.

In view of my present role as it is a key position with the WFN Corporation and is a demanding job, I know that in order for me to be an effective administrator I needed to further develop my skills and to acquire knowledge and tools to achieve my goal. I decided to return to school to study at the university level in Administration. It is hard but I know I have to work hard to achieve what I set out to pursue and it is up to me to succeed. I am a firm believer that anything is possible if you don't give up.

The point of my story is that you have to work hard towards your goals and never give up on yourself. No matter how difficult it gets, if you are patient and persevere you will achieve your goal. Even if you fail the first time you try to do something, never give up. You just have to persist and keep trying until you get achieve what you set out to do for yourself. Remember, when one door closes another door of opportunity is open. It is up to you what you want to do with your life, if you want to work hard to pursue your goals or just stay in the community after you graduate from high school and get odd jobs. For some of us, our biggest fear is failing, but how will we know if we don't even try. Who knows, you might succeed the first time. The Creator gave each of us a special gift or talent and it is within us. It is also up to each of us to find what this gift is. Don't waste your life, get your education and be all that you can be.

Be smart and stay in school!
Louisa Mamianskum-Wynne

1st place English

Verbal Abuse

I remember my first day of school. The kids accepted me right away, we would all play together in the classroom. At the end of each day, my mom would ask about how everything was at school, I would tell her about my little friends and how much fun we had.

I was raised in a loving home where I was taught to be kind and share my toys with other kids. Not knowing that not everyone had parents like mine. As I grew, I learned that troubled kids do exist.

The first year in grade one, I experienced feelings that I could not understand. I would often cry at home and begged my parents not to send me to school again. One of my classmates was making fun of me in front of everyone. Soon I did not have friends because nobody wanted to talk to me, I guess they were afraid that they are going to be treated the same way. Everyday I faced name-calling, belittling, swearing and insults.

I recall that we were asked to write about our dreams. That's when I noticed that my dream was to be able to stand on the playground without anyone hurting me. I could not see myself in any profession. I just wanted to get out of this world.

As I approached my teen years, I realized that I had dreams too. After school, other students would want to beat me up just for the fun of it. I would run home as fast as I could, hoping that they would not catch me. Lately I realized that I wanted to be a marathon runner which I did not bother to try.

Verbal Abuse robs you of energy, drive, certainty, talent, spirit and love. A tremendous damage is done to a verbally abused person. I cannot tell you how emotionally tiring it is. It affects one's health and weakens your self-esteem. It also leads to negative self-image, depression and self-destructive acts.

Verbal Abuse exists in every school and it is tough on kids. The earlier and more pervasive the abuse, the greater the potential for crippling a child's development, socially, academically or otherwise.

Having gone through feelings of hopelessness, guilt, worthlessness or helplessness, I can tell you that Verbal Abuse is cruel and scars your soul. These are scars that stay in your heart and never truly go away.

A negative internal dialogue may cause us to avoid challenges and miss opportunities in life for fear of "failure".

Today, I am glad that I am still here and able to share my experience with others. I am also very proud to say that I got out of school by graduating. My advice to anyone who relates to what I just shared is to be patient, strong, go for your dreams and never give up. After all it is your life, don't let anyone ruin it!

Name: **Cindy Neeposh**
Community of origin: Mistissini
Name of institution: Algonquin College

2nd Place English

Why Reading is Important to ME

In school we read. We read lots of interesting books. Reading is very important because it can teach us new words – It can make us smarter.

I think reading is important to me because it can help me learn new words. Books can take us places that we've never been before. Books can make you cry and make you happy.

Reading is very very important because it can make your writing skills better and you can learn new words and things. Reading can give you ideas. Reading can make you think for yourself and make you stand up for yourself.

When you read, your mind gets stronger. Reading is very important for school and in life. If no one learns how to read it would be possible for then not to be able to talk well. Reading is important to me because it gives me good grades and I like it. It helps me have a good life, because it helps my mind.

Sometimes when I read I do not want to get disturbed. In some books, the author is a good writer. Reading takes you to a whole new level of learning. Learning is an important thing in

life, you will use it in many ways, like helping people.

I think everyone should try to read every now and then so that will bring up their reading skills. I don't know a person who cannot read. Sometimes when a person is reading they can burst out crying. Every once in awhile I think people could go to the library to get a book.

Submitted by: **Jannah Loon**
For: The Nation & CSB Essay Contest
Age: 12

3rd Place English

Agreement in Principle between the Cree and Quebec.

Deciding the future

Making a decision on such a big issue, an issue, which will affect a whole nation for years to come, is not easy, especially when you have to make it in a few short months. How do you come to a decision? What information do you use to guide you? It's not a simple yes or no answer; it takes a lot of thinking, research and soul searching. I've spent many hours researching and reading, not for this essay but for myself. There were many questions I've had to ask myself. The following will consist of the first announcement, the Crees reaction, my personal reaction and feelings, the contents, benefits, the losses, the youth's reaction to it, the decision that was made and the decision I made.

The Agreement was first announced on October 23rd 2001. It came as a shock to many people, mostly because of the fact that it was negotiated in secrecy. Feeling of betrayal, confusion, anger and hurt were in the hearts of many Cree people. Roger Orr, in an interview with the Nation, referred to it as "prostituting your own mother". In my interpretation it would mean selling something that had given you life. "I almost feel betrayed. It's like the Grand Council is an extension of the Quebec Government", said Chisasibi council member Larry House in an interview with the Nation. Another person I quote is Bill Namagoose who said, "I've spend seven years of my life fighting for our rivers and in the end I end up losing mine", then goes on to say, "we have elders who say we cannot own the land, we can only be it's stewards", he says, "we are the owners of the land, not the janitors. I love the land and I love the river, but I love the people more." In my opinion, I think that he is disrespecting the beliefs and views of our elders. I would rather take an elder's word than politicians.

When I first heard that an agreement was going to be signed it was from an inside source. He merely said to me that my chief was lying to me and that something big was going to happen in Waskaganish. As soon as I heard those words I immediately thought of Rupert River and felt sad. I didn't think much of it considering my source was a bit intoxicated.

A couple of weeks later it was announced. I had heard rumours about it while chatting with someone over the internet. I felt a great pain in my heart and I started to weep. Visions and memories of time spent by the river with friends and family flooded my head. Ever since I can remember I have taken walks by the river with my parents, grandparents, friends and alone to sort out my thoughts in my head. I've shed tears on the banks of the river from losing loved one like the time I lost my grandfather. It was by that river that he spent time with me as a child; evenings while we sat by the river he could predict what the weather was going to be like in the coming day. He was never wrong. I always believed that I would on day be doing the same thing with my own grandchildren. There are times when the view of the river during sunset just takes my breath away, and a feeling of love fills my heart knowing that the Creator has blessed me and that through this beauty shows that he loves us all. It holds a very special place in my heart, and the thought of losing it just tears me apart, a feeling like losing someone very dear to you. I still carry that pain with me today as I write, and I am sure that it will be with me forever.

After the tears, came the questions, the biggest question was why? I longed so badly to be home and to speak to my elders, wanting to understand. I wanted to search for answers. It wasn't easy considering I was so far away from home. I came to school thinking I would educate myself and then join the fight in defending my home, my land and our river. What do you do when something that you truly believed in defending has already been given up? I lost all interest in school, but went on as best I could, I am not a quitter. So, I have shown you my passion and love for the great Rupert River, this is not just any river, it is my home.

The breakdown of the agreement given in an article entitled, "Dancing with the enemy", is that the Quebec government will pay the Cree a minimum of 3.5 billion dollars over the next fifty years. In return the Cree people of James Bay must allow Hydro installations on the Eastmain and Rupert Rivers. Also, the Cree will have more say and control over the logging and mining in their territory. They would also have to drop 3.8 billion dollar in lawsuits against Quebec. Sounds like a sweet deal, but is it really? The question of will the agreement in principle be honoured, still ponders my thoughts.

According to Alex Roslin in his article, "Cree deal, a model or betrayal?" stated that Premier Landry told Grand Chief Ted Moses, there would be no deal on forestry or funding for housing, sewers and other community infrastructure if the Crees do not

accept new dams on their territory.

The deal took an interesting turn when Deputy-Grand Chief Matthew Mukash broke ranks and came out against the agreement. In his statement to the Eeyou Nation he brought out one of the main points for his opposition; the Canadian and Quebec government's policies to extinguish aboriginal rights and title. The magazine Eeyou/Eenou Nation stated that the AIP process appeared to have no extinguishments clauses, but would not say for sure. He also argued that there was not enough time to make an informed decision, if we were ready to sacrifice more land and natural resources, and forgive Quebec for twenty-six years of unfulfilled obligations.

Will Nicholls, in his article, "Looking Ahead", gave a brief summary of where the 3.5 billion dollars promised in the deal is intended for. Development in all the Cree communities, funding of operations and programs such as the Cree Trappers Association, Cree Outfitting and Tourism, Cree Native Arts and Crafts Association, an Economic Development agent in each community and money to provide assistance to Cree entrepreneurs.

Monies will also go towards development for communities for things such as a permanent water supply for the community of Eastmain, job training programs, Cree Community Centers, sanitation services, electricity supply for Waskaganish and Whapmagoostui, Fire Protection including training equipment and facilities, assistance for Friendship Centers outside of the communities, improvement of access roads to Wemindji, Eastmain and Waskaganish. Yes, the Crees will finally have money to do things and all it will cost is more damming of our rivers.

The cost of the river? This river runs through three Cree communities, Waskaganish, Nemaska and Mistissini. A river that has provided a passage of trade and access to traditional hunting grounds, a river that provided a subsistence of life for the land, animals and the Cree people for many generations even before the arrival of Europeans. A river that not only runs through their land; but thought their hearts as well. The Crees have been fighting for the protection of their lands and traditional ways for decades. At first with the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement in the 1970's and then the fight against the proposed Great Whale Hydro-Electric Development Project in the 1990's in which the Cree were successful in getting that matter shelved in 1994. Also with logging and mining disputes that are damaging traditional lands and traplines.

There are many concepts that the Government and the Hydro-Quebec have not considered, like how will this affect our children. The future generations will be most affected by the damage that our political leaders have caused. This decision was made by referendum, 56% of eligible Cree voters turned up to vote and out of those 69% voted yes to the Agreement in Principle. When considering the Cree Nation as a whole, not even half of the Cree Nation voted yes. Is it fair to say that a majority of the Cree Nation was for the agreement? The Crees had the final say but not everyone would agree with the decision. There were many people who opposed and protested the best way they knew how. The youth also wanted their voices to be heard.

In an article, Alex Roslin stated that the chiefs were selling the agreement as good for the youth, but it was the youth who stood up to oppose it. The Cree Nation Youth Council came out in opposition of the deal and tried many times to have their voices heard. The youth from all nine Cree communities came together in Waskaganish to express their opinion and try to get answers to their questions. Then the new about the passing of the Grand Chief mother-in-law forced changes to the consultation process schedule. On January 24th, the youth gathered a second time in Chisasibi but were told that the leadership would be too busy that day and the next to attend.

They wanted to make a huge impact, they opened discussion on the Internet. They made pamphlets, signs and held special meetings to urge the youth to vote no. It is the youth that are the majority, 60% of the Cree population in the Cree Nation is under the age of thirty. They wanted to change the voting to thirteen but the chiefs did not allow it because they knew a majority of the youth would vote no. Communities suffer from unemployment, poor housing, drugs and alcoholism. The people in the communities want something to change, more jobs, training and houses. All this come with a price.

In 1976, when the Cree people had signed the JBNQA was when Hydro-Quebec and the Quebec government first made promises of compensation from the dams built and the damage it caused but these were unfulfilled promises. This shouldn't have to happen again, broken promises and still nothing for our people. After the mining companies have taken our natural resources and the forestry companies have clear cut all our forests, what will we have left? We have fought in the courts. The Crees have promised to drop all lawsuits. Are they tired of fighting?

In the end, the decision was made. The agreement was signed on February 7th 2002. It was broadcasted live on T.V. It was an agreement that divided leaders, communities, families... a nation. It was a decision that every eligible Cree voter had to make, whether to decide with the heart and vote no, or with the mind and vote yes. In the end it was a decision of the mind. It was scary to think of what will become of my people in the future, what will become of my home. If this is the wrong decision, it is not us but the future generations who will have to deal with our mistake. It is them who will feel the burden of their past and our present.

Stacy Bear
Post-Secretary Student from Waskaganish
General Arts and Science – Aboriginal Studies
Algonquin College, Ottawa

1st Place French

La vie de mon grand-père

Bonjour, je m'appelle Daphne Trapper. Ma professeure est Marlene Beaulieu. Je suis en secondaire 5 français. Je suis présentement à l'école Wiinibekuu. J'habite à Waskaganish. Le sujet que j'ai choisi pour faire mon texte est la biographie de mon grand-père. En commençant, la biographie de mon grand-père je vais vous introduire mon grand-père et aussi parler de sa famille. Tous les métiers qu'il a exercé et la salaire qu'il a gagné. Je vais aussi parler de sa famille et de ses enfants.

Mon grand-père s'appelle William James Stephen et est connu par beaucoup de personnes par le nom de Billy Stephen. Dans mon texte je vais référer à mon grand-père par Billy Stephen. Billy Stephen est né le 4 juin 1929. Ses parents s'appelaient Louise Katapatuk et Charlie Stephen. Il avait trois soeurs et six frères, ils étaient dix enfants don't lui qui était le sixième de sa famille. Ses frères s'appellaient Walter, Freddie, Stanley, Bobby, Patrick, Bert et ses soeurs étaient Florrie, Ethel et Edna. Seulement deux de ses frères sont encore vivants, Bobby et Stephen. A 23 ans, mon grand-père Billy a marié une jeune fille qui s'appellait Lizzie-Ann McLeod, le 24 juin 1952. Ils ont eu treize enfants ensemble dont neuf étaient des filles et quatre des garçons, ils ont aussi adopté une jeune fille qui avait perdu sa maman étant très jeune. Leurs enfants sont Nellie, Florrie, Doreen, Barbara, Charlie, Lucie, Kristy, Steve, Bernard, Valerie, Ronald, Sherry-Ann, Queenie et Margaret Cheezo, la fille adoptée. Billy a voulu que tous ses enfants apprennent le français et finissent leurs études.

Je vais maintenant parler de mon grand-père Billy et des métiers qu'il a exercé et aussi de quelques salaires qu'il a gagné. Le premier emploi qu'il a eu, il a travaillé avec la compagnie de la Baie d'Hudson pour donner à manger aux castors pendant les années où ils voulaient sauver les castors. Il travaillait avec Isaiah Salt. Billy a aussi travaillé à couper du bois de chauffage pour le gérant de la Baie d'Hudson. Il a travaillé dans la fabrication de canoës comme artisant de canoë. Un autre métier que mon grand-père a fait fut un homme de maintenance pour la mission catholique. Il a aussi participé à la construction de l'ancienne école qui est maintenant la bâtisse de l'éducation des adultes. Il aida aussi Bell Canada à poser des fils téléphoniques. Après il travailla pour l'aviation de LaSarre comme débardeur d'avion. Avec toute sa famille, il déménaga au "James S. C. Watt Memorial Hall" pour s'occuper de la grande salle qui s'appellait le "Hall". A dix-huit ans, il travailla pour la conservation de la chasse et de la pêche. Ensuite il retourna avec l'aviation LaSarre toujours comme débardeur d'avion. Ila ensuite travaillé dans la construction de maisons, et c'est là où mon grand-père a été frappé de malchance. Il a eu une légère crise cardiaque et les docteurs lui ont interdit de faire des travaux trop difficiles. C'est alors que le bureau de Bande lui a offert de diriger les services de buanderie pour le village de Waskaganish. En 1978, il devient chasseur et trappeur à temps plein. Même avec tout ces métiers, mon grand-père trouvalt du temps pour aller s'assoeolr auprès des gens mourants et consolait les familles qui perdaient un de leur membre. Il a cessé ça il n'y a que trois ans. Mon grand-père n'a pas étudié beaucoup. Il a fréquenté l'école jusqu'en deuxième année, son salaire n'était pas très gros; il gagnait $1.50 par jour. Ensuite quand il a travaillé pour Bell Canada, il gagnait $1.00 de l'heure et il travaillait 8 heures par jour. Quand il a travaillé à la buanderie, il gagnait $7.00 de l'heure. La buanderie était ouverte de 7:00am à 9:00pm.

En conclusion; aujourd'hui mon grand-père a soixante et treize ans. Il a cinquante-cinq petits enfants et vingt-neuf petit-petits enfants. Il est veuf depuis treize ans. Sa femme est morte le 2 juin 1987, deux jours avant sa fête. Il habite présentement avec Queenie, son mari et ses deux garçons. La raison pour laquelle j'ai voulu écrire la biographie de mon grand-père est parce que William James Stephen est mon seul grand-parent vivant. Je suis très fière de l'avoir pour grand-père, je le respecte beaucoup et je l'aime bien gros.

Merci!
Daphne Trapper, 2002
Ecole Wiinibekuu School, Waskaganish

2nd Place French

Le suicide...un acte qui fait mal!

Qu'est-ce qu'un suicidaire? De nos jours, quelles sont les majeures causes du suicide? De quelles façons peut-il s'y prendre? Qu'arrive-t'il quand un proche met fin à ses jours? Que faire si c'est vous qui y pensez? Voici quelques informations utiles à ce sujet...

Qu'est-ce qu'un suicidaire...et l'acte auquel il pense?

Le suicidaire est quelqu'un qui souffre et qui se trouve dans une impasse. Il se sent incapable de faire face à la situation alors aucune solution ne mettrait fin à sa souffrance qui est devenue intenable. À ce moment-la, il réalise que la seule issue de secours est le suicide, qui est en fait une absence de choix. Certainement que la personne avait envisagé divers scénarios qui malheureusement n'étaient pas tous valables. Le suicidaire veut avant tout mettre fin à la douleur quìl y a en lui, mais pas nécessairement y laisser sa peau. Le seuil de tolérance diffère d'un individu à l'autre. Avant de prendre une mauvaise décision, même si vous dites que c'est votre vie et qu'elle vous appartient, vous vous devez de réaliser que le suicide est un acte irréversible tandis que votre problème lui est temporaire.

Quelles sont les plus grandes causes du suicide?

Chez les adolescents, les principales causes du suicides sont la consommatin de drogues (qui causent aussi la dépression), l'alcool, l'anorexie et la boulimie (plus souvent chez les filles et rarement chez les garçons), la violence conjugale, les agressions sexuelles, la dépression causée souvent par une peine d'amour, la mauvaise estime de soi, la mort d'un proche, etc. Parfois, il y a le suicide collectif, qui peut avoir lieu, par exemple, dans une secte quelconque, mais cela est plus souvent vu chez les adultes.

Certaines raisons ont l'air stupides pour les personnes qui ne sont pas visées, mais pour le suicidaire, c'est tout autre chose; elles sont d'une grande importance et c'est pour ça que la personne croit que ça durera toujours ou trop longtemps pour elle, qu'elle

estime qu'il n'y a rien d'autre à faire et qu'elle imagine la mort comme une délivrance.

Comment peuvent-ils penser à se suicider?

Ils peuvent avoir recours à différents moyens. Ça passe du couteau à la simple corde à linge. Cachez-lui les médicaments, surveillez la personne en question quand elle mange (elle pourait se servir des ustensiles), essayez de voir ce qu'elle met dans son véhicule et qu'elle soit le plus souvent possible avec quelqu'un (car elle peut penser à utiliser un boyau pour tenter de s'asphyxier avec le gaz d'échappement du véhicule). Ces gens peuvent même penser aux choses les plus banales comme un crayon (qui remplace un poignard) ou des choses comme ça. Il y a plusieurs autres façons, bien sûr, alors observez toujours ce qui l'entoure.

Que faire si vous pensez passer à l'acte?

Il vous faut parler à une personne de confiance, comme un ami, un parent, un professionnel de votre école ou du CLSC. Vous pouvez faire appel à des organismes comme Tel-Jeunes ou le Centre de Prévention du Suicide.* Il est bon aussi de régler ses problèmes un à la fois, étape par étape, car quand on veut tout régler un même temps, la tâche semble insurmontable et on se décourage plus facilement.

Comment se sortir du suicide d'un proche?

Il est sûr que vous pleurerez, crierez et que vous serez colérique (sinon, vous n'êtes pas normal), que vous ressentirez de la culpabilité et que vous vous ferz des rproches (par exemple : si je n'avais pas été comme ça il serait probablement encore la...) et même que vous penserez sûrement à imiter son erreur. À ce moment-la, il faut accepter que la personne ait fait ce geste, à savoir que ce n'est pas de votre faute, que tu n'as pas le contrôle sur les actes qu'il ou elle pose et que vous devez en parler à une personne de confiance. Par exemple, vous pouvez appeler à Tel-Jeunes au 514-228-2266 si vous êtes dans la région de Montréal, ou le 1-800-263-2266 de l'extérieur. Vous pouvez également aller sur Internet pour d'autres informations sur le site de www.tel-jeune.com ou sur d'autres sites en anglais ou français que vous trouverez avec l'outil de recherche de www.google.com

*Sites webs en français
Écrit par **Kamala Héroux Houle** 2002
École Eeyou de la Baie James - Chisasibi

3rd Place French

L'École Annie Whiskeychan Memorial School

Bonjour, je m'appelle Twyla Diamond. J'ai 13 ans. Je suis en 2e secondaire. Mon école s'appelle École Wiinibekuu School. Mon village c'est Waskaganish. Je vais vous parler de l'école Annie Whiskeychan Memorial Elementary School.

Il y a un gymnase, un local de culture crie, une salle d'ordinateurs, une bibliothèque et une salle d'audio-visuel. L'école est située près de la clinique médicale, en arrière du "Gathering Place". Le gymnase est plus gros que le nôtre. L'école est un peu bleu et beige.

L'école a été nommée Annie Whiskeychan parce que les élèves ont voté pour ça. Annie était une merveilleuse personne. Elle était une enseignante ici à Waskaganish. Elle a aussi fait des livres pour les élèves. Elle était la soeur de mon grand-père. J'aimais beaucoup Annie.

On a besoin d'une nouvelle école parce qu'on est beaucoup ici à Wiinibekuu. Présentement les élèves de maternelle vont à l'école au "Gathering Place".

L'école va ouvrir après Noël. J'espère que nous aussi nous aurons une nouvelle école avec une piscine et une cafétéria. J'aimerais voir plus de gens aller à l'école parce que nous au secondaire on pourrait aussi avoir une nouvelle école.

Twyla Diamond
École Wiinibekuu School, Waskaganish

Honourable Mention

L'École Annie Whiskeychan Memorial School

Bonjour, je m'appelle Savannah Jonah. Je suis en 2e secondaire français. J'ai 13 ans. Mon école s'appelle École Wiinibekuu School. Je vais à l'école ici à Waskaganish.

La nouvelle école est rouge et bleue. Il y a un gymnase, une bibliothèque, deux locaux de culture crie, un pour les filles et un pour les garçons, il y a aussi une classe d'ordinateurs. Nous avons aussi un logo.

Annie était une professeure ici à Waskaganish. Elle aimait écrire en cri. Elle était gentille avec tous les élèves de l'école Wiinibekuu. Annie a beaucoup de petit-enfants ici à l'École Wiinibekuu.

On a besoin d'une nouvelle école parce qu'il n'y a pas assez d'espace pour la maternelle, la pré-maternelle et le cours de morale. Il y a beaucoup d'enfants au primaire.

L'école ouvrira après Noël. J'espère que la famille de Jimmy Whiskeychan sera la et j'espère qu'il va couper le ruban.

Savannah Jonah, 2002
École Wiinibekuu School, Waskaganish

Cicely Trapper - First Place Cree

ᐊᑭᓯᐣ ᑕᓂᐅ ᐊᐅᐣ ᐊ ᐊᐳᒋᑦᑕᐢ ᐅᓀ ᑲ ᒪᓴᓇᐦᐃᑎᓱᓐ. ᓂ ᓴᓂᓕ ᑕᔅᑦᐢ. ᐅᑯᐦ ᐊ ᐦᐃᒋᑕᒪᓐ ᑲ ᐃᑌᐳᐦᑕᒪᓐ ᑲ ᐃᓀᓄ ᑭᓇᑕᒪᓱᓐ. ᓄᐃᑲ ᓂᑯ ᑕᓴᐦᐅᓐ ᓂ ᑎᐱᐅ ᓂᑕᐊᓄᒧᐃᐢ ᐅᑯ ᐃᔨ ᑭᓇᑕᒪᓱᓐ. ᓂᔅᑐ ᓂᑯ ᐃᐦᑕᓐ ᒪᐦᑭ ᑕᓂᐅ ᑲ ᐃᓀᓄ ᑭᓇᑕᒪᓱᓐ. ᓄᐃᑲ ᓂᑯ ᐅᑯᐦᐃᑎᐢ ᐊᑯᓇᓄᓐ ᐅ ᐊᐳᑕᐦᐃᐢ ᓂᑭᓇᑕᒪᑲᓐ. ᓄᐃᑲ ᓂᑯ ᑕᓴᐦᐅᓐ ᑲᑯ ᓂᓂᑐᑐᑲᐢ ᑭᓇᐃᓀᓄᐢ ᐅ ᐊᐳᑕᐦᑕᐢ, ᑲᑯ ᐃᑌᐳᐦᑕᒪᓐ ᑲᒪ ᔨᓴ ᐃᓀᓄᐢ ᑭᓇᑕᒪᓱᓐ. ᔨᓴ ᒪᐢ ᓂᑲ ᑯ ᐊᐳᑕᐦᐊᐅᐢ ᑭᓇᐃᓀᓄᐢ. ᑕᐢ ᑫᐢᐧ ᑲ ᔨᑎᐦᐃᐢᐧ ᐅᐦᑐᑦ ᐊᐳᔨᐃᐢᐧ ᐅᑯ ᑭᓇᑕᒪᓱᓐ.

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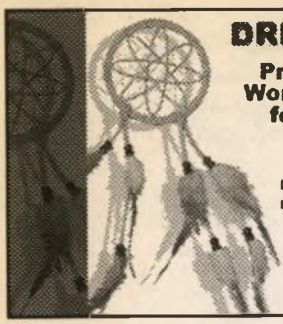

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Final Yarn

BY
MELORA KOEPKE

"This is a story that will make you believe in God." A tall order, to be sure, and a risky pivot to hinge a novel on. God, after all, isn't usually a selling point for stories for big-city readers. But it worked. Maybe it's because *Life of Pi*, the third novel by 39-year-old Montreal writer Yann Martel, is also a total page-turner. Simple enough to be read to children and so intricate that several readings wouldn't be wasted on it, it's pretty much a miracle that last October, Martel won the biggest literary prize in the world. They don't usually give those sorts of prizes to books that lots of people, all kinds of people, will enjoy.

Life of Pi is the imaginary autobiography of Piscine Molitor Patel, a 16-year-old Indian boy who is Christian, Muslim and Hindu. Pi's family, who were zookeepers in Pondicherry, India, decide to emigrate to Canada. They bring along all their animals on a big steamship, and Pi is orphaned when the ship sinks. He is left afloat in the Pacific for 277 days with a hyena, an orangutan, a zebra, and a 450-pound Bengal tiger named Richard Parker. He lives to tell the tale.

In a certain sense, *Life of Pi* is a typical quest-myth coming-of-age story like the ones that exist in every culture in the world: a young person left to his own devices in the world learns how to depend on his own wits. It is also a fairy tale, but a strange one, for Martel was careful, in researching the book, to create scenarios that, while very unlikely, were not totally impossible in the real world.

Anyone who loves a castaway story will be immediately captivated by the details of Pi's clever problem-solving and his strange adventures.

Martel did a ton of research over the four years it took him to write the book: he studied world religions, ocean survival and animal psychology. He put God into the details, you might say.

Martel insists during an interview that God, in fact, is everywhere, if you want to believe the story that faith tells. In fact, he believes that religious faith is like a really good story or a myth that you want to believe because it makes the world a more interesting and worthwhile place.

"I realized that fiction and religion work in exactly the same way – essentially, that faith in anything, belief of any kind, involves an element of will," he says.

"For a novel to work, the reader must suspend disbelief, and with religion, choice is the first element of faith. Grand ideas don't usually hit you on the head forcefully. Do you live life as an atheist, or choose to believe? It's really a matter of picking the better story."

Martel, who has walked thousand-mile religious pilgrimages, is the first to admit that his stories are full of unlikely events. It's something he enjoys greatly.

"I wanted to talk about the unreasonable, so I wrote a story where one of the central themes is the believability of events."

Martel's castaway tale is, as mentioned before, wildly improbable. Near the end of the book, his hero encounters a "scientific," more practical version of the mysterious things that have befallen him. In this possible version, the details are tragic and horrible. The reader gets to decide which story she prefers: the godly one, bursting with life, colour and animals, or the secular, depressing one.

So will *Life of Pi* really make you believe in God? Only if you're already so inclined. But Martel insists that the Choose-Your-Own-Adventure quality of the story is not meant to be taken lightly.

"You could completely disagree and think it was unsuccessful in some way, but it does stand out. It takes on things that are completely unfashionable, like religion, which is only in style to the extent that you parody it, or dismiss it," he says.

But either way, the important thing to Martel is to write a story. After all, what's a fairy tale without the tale?

"You need plot; plot is underrated," Martel insists. "It has been reviled as more of a thriller thing. Of course you want beautiful language, but by itself a turn of phrase is just fireworks.

"I've written two novels, *Self* and *Pi*. After the latter, I realized how good it felt to have a story to tell. With a structure of plot to work with, I felt that, in writing *Pi*, I could go deep and still be very both very entertaining and elevating."

So was he surprised that so many "literary types" were willing to give *Life of Pi* such a big prize?

"I knew when I finished it was a good book, no matter how people reacted to it...so if it had completely flopped, I would have been disappointed: I would have felt a sense of injustice," he says frankly. "But did I necessarily think it would win? No. When you're writing a book and you're vaguely ambitious, you have thoughts –But it's not completely a lottery. So if Danielle Steele had won the Booker instead of me I would have been like, fuck, what is this?"

Martel, bolstered by his success, says he has two more books in him before he considers quitting the writing world. The next one involves a donkey and a monkey who live on the shirt of a Nazi in WWII-era Germany. One suspects that he can't help pushing the boundaries of belief to an even further limit.

Celebrating the holidays with a bang

Xavier Kataquapi

The holiday season is an exciting time in remote Native communities up the James Bay coast. This period is anticipated and celebrated in the same way as most southern non-Native communities but with just a few differences.

The day leading up to Christmas Day or New Year's Day was always a hectic period for the whole family. As a young boy, my younger brothers and I kept busy outdoors with our friends to avoid the chaos and anxiety at home. Most of my older brothers and sisters helped with the family business or assisted mom in creating a huge feast of traditional goose, moose, caribou and non-traditional foods such as salads, turkey, stuffing, cookies and Christmas cake. At the same time as cooking, mom cleaned our home from top to bottom to get it ready for the many visitors that would arrive during the holidays. My younger brothers and I were too small to take part in a hard working business and too young to help mom with the cooking and cleaning.

The night leading up to Christmas Eve was a time that was spent around the Catholic Church on the banks of the river in the community. At the start of the holiday season in December, half of the front stage area of the church was decorated in several pine trees from the forest. The tall pines surrounded a manger scene in the middle and shiny decorations reflected the colours of strings of numerous Christmas lights. The night leading up to Christmas was a marathon of three mass services which took place at seven, ten and a last service at midnight. Usually, the first mass was under attended, the second was the most popular with many children in attendance. This ten o'clock mass was attended by just about everyone in the community. The pews were filled to capacity, the aisles lined with extra chairs and there was only standing room at the rear of the church.

I remember when I was a teenager, helping with the church services as an altar server or operating the church's video camera which was used to broadcast the service to local televisions. It was hard to keep my eyes open this late at night but I managed to stay awake through the three one hour and half long church services.

At Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve at the stroke of midnight, hunters and trappers brought out their guns to fire into the cold night air to celebrate Christmas or signal in the New Year. At midnight on these special days, I remember hearing gun shots going off from one end of the community to the other for about half an hour as everyone brought out their best rifles and shot guns to mark the holidays.

This unique tradition came from a time when my people lived a traditional lifestyle and had a great respect for guns and ammunition. Back then, the gun was a tool used for survival and ammunition was rationed for use on the land to bring food home. Everyone in the community once gathered around the Hudson's Bay store manager's home to listen to the loud bang of his rifle or shot gun on Christmas or New Year's Eve. People back then could not afford to use their own firearms for fear of losing resources for hunting and gathering but enjoyed the loud noise to mark the special points during the holidays. When times changed and ammunition became affordable, everyone with a gun in the community continued this tradition in front of their homes. Today this tradition has evolved again and most people now use fire crackers, bright flares or mini fire works to celebrate the holidays with a bang or by lighting up the night. I guess you could say we James Bay Cree have always enjoyed celebrating the holidays with a bang.

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101 – Birthdays

I would like to wish a Happy 21st Birthday to one of the Mistissini Trappers #28, Andy Metabie. His birthday is on January 13. Have a great one Andy ! From Sarah Blacksmith xox

I would like to wish Jordan James Bensen House-Sealhunter a 'Happy 1st Birthday' on Feb 28, 2003. Fr : Bella R. XOXOX

We would like to wish a Happy 25th Anniversary to our wonderful and very supportive parents, Annette and Sinclair Neeposh on December 23rd 2002. We thank God everyday for the loving and very helpful parents we have. We thank you both from the bottom of our hearts. You've always been there for us whenever we needed help or whenever we were in trouble. May God keep you in his loving arms and keep you both safe throughout your life together. We'll always keep you in our prayers. Happy 25th Anniversary ! Love and prayers, from Sinclair, Melanie, Starr, Serena and Selena Neeposh. X0X0X0X0

We would like to wish a Happy 22nd Anniversary to my parents Harry and Dorothy Happyjack, on December 22nd 2002. Nobody could ask for parents that are so helpful and very supportive, thank you for always being there for us whenever we needed help. May God keep you in his loving arms forever. May you both enjoy another 22 years together. Love and prayers, from Melanie, Sinclair, Starr, Serena and Selena Neeposh. XOXOX

300 – Personals

I would like to wish my brothers, sisters, nieces, nephews, sisters and brothers-in-law a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year, wherever you are. Take care and may the Heavenly Father bless you all and keep you well in His sweet tender loving care.

If you served with the Canadian Armed Forces in the First World War, Second World War or Korean War, you may be able to receive up to $20,000 from the Government of Canada.

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To find out more about who is eligible, or to request an application form, *call toll-free:* **1-800-818-3286**. For the Hearing Impaired call 1-800-465-7735.

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From the family of Susan Mamianskum-Nabinacaboo.

I would like to wish a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to my aunts and uncles and their families in Whapmagoostui, and Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to my cousin in Mistissini John Longchap and my old time friends. From Ruby Nabinacaboo and the kids in Kawawa.

I would like to wish a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to my grandmother and grandfather, Sophie and Lawrence Diamond. Hope to see you during the holidays. Love you both. Love, Kassandra Diamond (Nemaska)

I would like to say Hi to my sister Elvira (D) and my friends C and G in Nemaska. Just a few words to let you know that I miss you, I miss our silly talks and laughters. So, when are you guys planning to come down ? Soon I hope. If you can't, at least try. Hey sis, it's so boring without you at home. Wish you were here. With all my love, B.

We over here in the land of no snow but slush, wanna wish a "Freakin Amazing New Year 2003" to our buddies in the Cree territory, especially to Audrey and Yvonne-Jane in Whapmagoostui. Hope life is treating you very well girls and may this new coming year be filled with love, happiness, fullfilment and most of all health. Lots of blue stars sent your way on the wings of angels... Peace and strength. We love you and miss you lots. Hope to see you at some point either up there or down here ok. Love, from Danielle, Linda and Mona Mona XOXOXOXOXO

My wish for the New Year ... May all of the people, animals and land of the Cree nation be blessed with the magic from the Supreme Being. May we all regard and treat each other with respect, compassion, love and understanding – even amongst our differences. Let work towards peace on earth, respect of our environment and an end to violence to our own. Let's remember that life is very short, very precious and very precarious. Therefore let's really be grateful for it, everyday, and take it by the horns and live it to it's fullest... Have a great one people ! From Nanuke.

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